Akha A04
Miao AE5

/87 cont./

M 864 [825] told that the gibbons and monkeys, which animate the primeval forest in the neighborhood of the villages, put the babies in the laps of the women. Thus, among the Meau, the apes occupy the position of our stork. The explanation of the facts of life is given to the children of the Meau at the time of puberty at the latest.

A M 838 839 Onanism, homosexuality, and other sexual perversions are not found among either the Akha or the Meau. In most instances I did not even succeed in explaining these concepts to my informants, but when I did, they indignantly denied their occurrence, pointing out that the ancestors and spirits would prevent such perversions.

A M 836 626 [835] [831] Within the incest prohibitions, which apply not only to marriage, but also to free love (see the section, "Marriage Obstacles and Regulations," in this chapter) and are strictly observed, since a violation, according to the belief of the natives, would be immediately punished by the ancestors and spirits, the choice of a partner is completely free for the young men, whereas public opinion, but not the young men themselves, demands chastity of the girl. In practice, however, the demands of public opinion only result in secrecy, by boys as well as girls, about everything that is connected with sexual life.

A M 836 [832] [833] In the case of younger boys, the older girls take the initiative by flirtation, at which they are masterfully adept. It often happens that a girl who teaches a young boy /88/ the arts of love-making later on becomes his chief wife, since she most likely will become pregnant. Older boys, on the other hand, often assume the training of the young girls. We frequently had an opportunity to observe an open flirtation. My M 832 883 123 wife wrote about one such observation in her journal: "May, the chief's daughter, is probably about sixteen years old and is a typical 'teen-ager' in behavior. She giggles at the least thing or bursts into loud peals of laughter over a remark shouted at her by one of the boys. It is loudest, however, when several girls are assembled. They chatter and laugh so loudly and unrestrainedly, even when we are working nearby, that we are

AKha A04
Miao AE5

/110 cont./

A 582 648 563 114 [609] [535] Among the Akha, on the other hand, the strict tribal endogamy is not relaxed even theoretically. As a rule strangers to the tribe may not even appear at the dancing places as spectators! The Census of Burma (1), however, speaks of a

1. Vol. XI, p. 183.

strong mixture with the Chinese, which I myself was unable to verify anywhere. Scott (2), too, mentions that the Akha women

2. II, p. 270.

are instantly willing to marry any stranger," and that the "girls are inexpensive and not particular." To be sure, these reports say nothing about what region they are dealing with, so I was unable to ascertain whether or not these were perhaps tribal splinter-groups that more or less voluntarily were subject to the Chinese.

A M 582 835 Besides the above-mentioned and practiced tribal endogamy, among the Meau, as well as among the Akha, blood relationship up to the third generation /Glied, "member, rank, generation"/ is viewed as an obstacle to marriage. Beyond that, however, among both peoples bearers of the same name may marry.

A 835 614 178 Though the incest rules are strictly applied -- Telford (3)

3. Page 149.

even writes that incest is punished by being buried alive -- nevertheless among the Akha there is a custom that relaxes these regulations. It is of special importance particularly in the mountains of Thailand, where there are small enclaves of the very prolific Akha, who are able to maintain only loose connections with the compactly settled groups. If in such enclaves there are especially many offspring, even for the Akha, A [574] within a sib, the two oldest family heads, who are usually brothers, organize a great festival in which all the members

/213 cont./

123 262 [164] woman showed that she was suffering from hookworms, which could easily be cured.

I have already mentioned the taboo which comes into effect, in case of a death in a village, for the village community as well as for the mourners and especially for the family whose member has died. Food prohibitions are not tied in with death, but after the death of a woman, the children and the widower have to refrain from sexual intercourse for one year whereas after the death of the husband, widows are subject to this commandment for only one week.

784 765 [262] [834]

834 846 Marabail (1) reports of the Meau in Tonkin that after the birth of a child the parents may not have sexual intercourse with each other.

1. Page 451.

835 The incest taboo is observed very strictly among the Meau in Thailand. It is forbidden for young blood-relatives of the opposite sex to stand together or to look or smile at each other. Since, as I stated earlier, any Meau man to whom a girl offers a glass of alcohol views this, according to custom, as an invitation, it is strictly forbidden for girls /214/ to serve alcohol or even to drink to men against whom the marriage prohibition applies for them.

[273] [832]

533 461 784 [626] In the fields of the so musically inclined Meau, one does not hear singing during the work or during rests, because this would violate a taboo. It is believed to be certain that non-observance would bring a misfortune, that one of the workers would be hurt, either by a tool or by part of a falling tree.

784 [177] Just as the Meau in their cult practices do not in general want to borrow anything from the pertinent customs of the other peoples living around them, so are the many prohibitions of the Chinese unknown to them or ignored. On the other hand great significance is attached to every native taboo. Every taboo is in force for the entire life of the individual as well as for the whole tribe; the only exceptions are taboos that are limited in time, which are automatically lifted after the

[756]